THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED) : (a) and (b) Business dealing in the non-statutory spheres with M/s. P. J. Pipes and Vessels Ltd., Bombay and all their allied firms by M/o Commerce and its attached/subordinate offices have been banned for a period of five years commencing from 12-8-93.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) Yes, Sir.

(f) The report has been examined and follow-up action, pertaining to the Ministry of Commerce, has already been taken Action Taken Report has also been furnished to the Rajya Sabha Secretariat. Specifically, besides banning business dealings with the firm as detailed in reply to part (b), it has also been decided to broad-base the composition of the Advance Licensing Committee/Special Imprest Licensing Committee by including representative from the Project Authority and/or Administrative Ministry concerned, where necessary.

(g) and (h) The recommendation of Rajya Sabha Committee on Government Assurances regarding an enquiry against persons/officials involved in the grant of import licences would not apply to the Ministry of Commerce as on irregularity in the grant of import licences has come to light.

Privatisation of MMTC

5314. SHRI SARDA MOHANTY :
SHRI SOM PAL :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government intend to privatise the Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether some modalities have been finalised in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, by when these are likely to be finalised?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) to (e) Government have not taken any decision to privatise the Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation.

US Annual Report on Foreign Trade Barrier Quantitative Restrictions

5315. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA :
SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the US annual report on foreign trade barrier quantitative restrictions under negative import list and other impediments in Indo-US Trade;

(b) if so, the details of the barrier relaxation demanded therein; and

(c) what is Government's reaction thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED) : (a) to (c) The Office of the United States Trade Representatives released its Annual Report or Foreign Trade Barriers on 31 March, 1994. The chapter on India alleges week intellectual property rights protection, particularly in the area of patents and enforcement of copyright; and barriers in the area of trade in goods and services which include tariffs, import licencing, quantitative restrictions, government procurement and export subsidies.

India does not have any unfair trade practices. It has been consistently the policy of the government that there should not be unilateral judgement or action on trade matters and that this should be resolved multilaterally.

Import Duty Reduction in GATT Agreement

5316. SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA :
SHRI SHANKAR DAYAL SINGH :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that as per GATT agreement due to import duty reduction about half of the industrial products will now enter developed countries duty free, and overall average tariff will amount to 3 to 9 per cent of the price of the end product ;

(b) whether it is also a fact that due to the above import duty cuts for import in industrial countries, developing countries would be able to export more fruits, vegetables, flowers, dairy produces, grains and tobacco; and

(c) if so, the prospects for Indian exports, details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED) : (a) to (c) According to a study done by the GATT Secretariat, after implementation of Uruguay Round results, the proportion of developed-economy merchandise imports from all sources that enters duty-free would be more than double, i.e. from 20% to 43%. This study suggests that the trade weighted average tariff on industrial products in developed countries will come down from 6.4% to 4%.

The Uruguay Round Agreement on Agriculture envisages (i) the "tariffication" of all non-tariff border measures, a target reduction of 36 per cent in the resulting tariffs and existing customs duties, and a binding of all agricultural duties at the new levels; (ii) a 20 per cent reduction in domestic support measures (expressed in the form of an aggregate measurement of support); and (iii) reductions of 36 per cent in budgetary outlays on export subsidies and reduction by 21 per cent in the quantity of subsidized exports, Adoption of these measures will enhance market access opportunities for agricultural commodities in all countries, both developed and developing.

Revival of sick Tea Gardens by Tea Plantation Workers Co-operatives

5317. SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU :
SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE :
SHRI KAJUBHAI A. PARMAR :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Tea plantation workers' cooperatives, in Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya and other States in North-East have been successful in not only reviving the sick tea gardens but in increasing their productivity manifold, a feat which the Tea Corporation of India had failed to achieve;

(b) if so, the details of such tea gardens; and

(c) what steps have been and are being taken to promote such cooperative efforts to other sick tea gardens including those under the Tea Corporation ?